

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 581
By Fowlkes

A RESOLUTION to designate a certain bridge on U. S. Highway
64 in Giles County as the "R. Morris Harwell
Bridge".

WHEREAS, from time to time, this General Assembly has seen fit to name certain
highways and bridges to honor those distinguished citizens who have contributed immeasurably
to the growth and prosperity of their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, Robert Morris Harwell was born on Valentine's Day, 1904, on a farm near
Little Bradshaw Creek in Giles County; and

WHEREAS, because his father died soon after Mr. Harwell's birth, he went to work at a
very early age, often toiling in the fields for neighboring farmers for fifty cents a day; and

WHEREAS, his early introduction to the Puritan work ethic prepared him well for life; at
the ripe old age of 12, he had begun a career in merchandising at \$20.00 per month
compensation; and

WHEREAS, while driving for his uncle with Neely Harwell and Company, Mr. Harwell
struck up a lifelong friendship with the future governor of Tennessee, Gordon Browning; and

WHEREAS, after a brief stint in Ohio, Mr. Harwell returned to Frankewing, Tennessee to
once again work for Mr. Oscar West at West and Storey; and

WHEREAS, during this period, he met and later married Thelma Louise Marks, the
daughter of his employer's biggest competitor, L. M. Marks; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Harwell bought half interest in the L. M. Marks and Sons store, and operated the business until the early 1930s, when Mr. Harwell returned to work for Neely Harwell and Company; and

WHEREAS, during this time, Morris and Thelma were blessed with the birth of three children, Martha Joyce, Morris Edward, and Rolly Marks, as they continued to make their home in Frankewing; and

WHEREAS, the Harwells were active members of Mt. Zion Methodist Church, and Mr. Harwell served astutely and with conviction as a Sunday school superintendent and lay speaker for many years; and

WHEREAS, he also served his fellow citizens with acumen and alacrity as a member of the Giles County Court, being elected even though he refused to campaign; and

WHEREAS, he was a charter member of the Frankewing Lion's Club and served as its first president; and

WHEREAS, he was a director and later served as president of the Bank of Frankewing; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1950s when his son, Morris Edward returned home from the Korean War, they decided to open Morris Harwell and Son in Pulaski; and

WHEREAS, this was not Mr. Harwell's first venture into the ready-to-wear business, however, he had owned and operated Morris' Budget Shop in the late 1940s as a credit clothing store and he later opened a ladies clothing store in Lawrenceburg; and

WHEREAS, after it became apparent that Morris Harwell and Son was going to be successful, Mr. and Mrs. Harwell moved to Pulaski to be closer to their business; and

WHEREAS, they built a house on U.S. Highway 64, and lived happily there until Mrs. Harwell's death in 1979; and

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Harwell were active members of the Pulaski community; they were among the founding members of St. Andrew Methodist Church and he continued to serve meritoriously as a lay speaker in the Pulaski District; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harwell served with distinction on the board of directors of the First National Bank and was later named "director for life"; and

WHEREAS, he still serves as a board member of the First Pulaski National Corporation, the bank's holding company; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harwell's exemplary service to the Pulaski community was recognized when he was honored with the V.F.W. Citizen of the Year Award; and

WHEREAS, he served with the utmost probity and proficiency as president of the Giles County Cancer Society and as a board member of the Tennessee Cancer Society; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harwell has also been a generous and faithful supporter of Martin College, setting up a scholarship fund in his late wife's honor; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, he married Margaret Harris, a childhood friend, and the couple continues to reside in Pulaski in a house where his grandparents lived in the early 1900s; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harwell remained actively involved in the management of Morris Harwell and Son until he reached the age of 90, when it became necessary for him to retire because of his health; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, he and his son sold the store to his grandson, Robert Henson, and thus the business remains in the family; and

WHEREAS, even though he will turn 94 on Valentine's Day, 1998, Mr. Harwell still maintains an interest in the National Store, Morris' Shop, and The Outlook Stores on the Pulaski Square; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harwell will inform you that he has enjoyed a wonderful life: It has included such outstanding experiences as being a member of the first Boy Scout troop organized in Giles County; joining the Masonic Lodge on his 21st birthday; being a faithful

member of the Methodist Church; achieving remarkable success as a businessman; and most importantly, being the beloved senior member of a loving and devoted family; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that a certain bridge which spans Bradshaw Creek, near Mr. Harwell's birthplace and early childhood home in Giles County, should be named to honor this peerless gentleman and his life of purpose and commitment to others; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the bridge spanning Bradshaw Creek on U.S. Highway 64 in Giles County (just east of where Interstate 65 crosses such highway, and just west of the Buford Beadle Bridge) is hereby designated the "R. Morris Harwell Bridge" as a lasting tribute to one of the most compassionate and public-spirited citizens this state has ever produced.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating such bridge as the "R. Morris Harwell Bridge";

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the erection of such signs or markers shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of Transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Mr. Harwell, with the final four resolving clauses omitted from such copy.